



Enclosure 2b  
February 3, 2019

## MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND RI BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 6, 2021

Pursuant to Governor Raimondo's Executive Order 20-34, this meeting was held remotely.

### RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Chair Barbara Cottam called the January 6, 2021, meeting of the RI Board of Education to order at 5:30 p.m. and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Due to social distancing restrictions, this meeting was held remotely:

**Remote Participation:** Michael Almeida  
Amy Beretta  
Colleen Callahan  
\*Margo Cook  
Barbara Cottam  
Karen Davis  
Timothy DelGiudice  
Patricia DiCenso  
Dennis Duffy  
Jo Eva Gaines  
Rachelle Green  
\*Mike Grey  
Thomas Izzo  
Marta Martinez  
Mike Mello  
Marianne Monte  
Lawrence Purtill  
\*Mackenzie Raimond  
Jeffery Williams

**Absent:** \*Brandon Feliz  
\*Stephan Pryor

\*Ex-officio, non-voting member

Public access was provided to attendees of this Zoom webinar in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the provisions of the Executive Order; contact information was provided for those experiencing technical difficulties.

Chair Cottam welcomed Michael Almeida and Patricia DiCenso, newly appointment members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as Mackenzie Raimond, a sophomore at RI College and the new Student Representative on the Council on Postsecondary Education, to their first meeting of the R.I. Board of Education.

**2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDAS**

- a. Council on Postsecondary Education  
Please refer to the minutes of the meeting of the Council on Postsecondary Education
- b. R.I. Board of Education

On a motion duly made by Karen Davis and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education accepts the agenda for the meeting of January 6, 2021

Vote: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Mike Mello, Marianne Monte, Lawrence Purtill, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

Board Chair Cottam welcomed everyone and noted that today's joint special meeting is for the purpose of following the statutory process (R.I.G.L. §16-59-6 and §16-97-1.2(g) for the appointment of a Commissioner of Postsecondary Education, where the Council on Postsecondary Education appoints the Commissioner and the full Board provides their advice and consent of the appointment. The Council is the employer of the Commissioner, and as such, both the appointment of the Commissioner and entering into an employment agreement are the purview of the Council, not the full Board. As noted on the agendas for the joint meeting, the first Discussion Item (agenda item #3a) and Action Item (agenda item #4a) will be for the Council to perform its responsibility. Chair Cottam noted that that it is extremely important that the full Board benefit from hearing from the Commissioner Search Finalist and the Council's discussion, reason why called for a joint meeting, as she has previously done when former Commissioners were hired.

**3a. DISCUSSION ITEM - Council on Postsecondary Education**

Please refer to the meeting minutes of the Council part of the meeting.

**4. ACTION ITEMS - Council on Postsecondary Education**

Please refer to the meeting minutes of the Council part of the meeting.

**5. ADJOURNMENT - Council on Elementary and Secondary Education**

**6. DISCUSSION ITEM - Rhode Island Board of Education**

- a. Discussion with and regarding the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education Appointee

Board Member Gaines expressed how happy she is to hear Dr. Gilkey mention his interest in K-12 education as several years ago the State adopted the mantra of education being PreK-16 to encourage vertical communication between higher education and secondary education. She feels that it has worked, but there is still a lot more to do. She is glad and relieved to hear that the new Commissioner is coming on board with that mindset, because very often we have to start over again when new people are hired.

Dr. Gilkey responded that he spent the first five years of his career as a high school dual credit teacher in career and technical education. He has a great passion for what happens in K-12 classrooms around the country and looks forward to working with the K-12 system.

Board Member Callahan shared that she too is a former K-12 teacher and currently with the RI Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals. She expressed that one of her passions is the alignment between K-12 and higher education and is thrilled to hear Dr. Gilkey speak about that. The other piece that came through for her was collaboration, which she welcomes and looks forward to working with him to continue to foster partnerships between the K-12 and the higher education systems.

Board Member Purtill expressed that he is also a former high school history teacher of 22 years and is currently with the National Education Association of Rhode Island, which represents many members in higher education. He shared that his big thing is mental health and social emotional supports to students. He voiced that it can be overwhelming for those students who have not been successful, to navigate getting their GED or finishing high school, and then trying to get into some type of other program. Making it easier for those students to be successful, such as doing K-12 and higher education at the same time, is something that he hopes Dr. Gilkey can pursue right away.

Dr. Gilkey responded that he currently oversees the GED Plus Program for the State of Kentucky, which is adult education and getting on a postsecondary credential pathway at the same time. He also agreed with Board Member Purtill on the mental health point for a couple of reasons – one, he is married to a geriatric psychiatrist and they talk about mental health and well-being at the dinner table, and two, it is also important for all students, whether they need their GED or they are a traditional student, that higher education really think about its role on checking on the mental well-being of students, as well as helping them transition into the economy.

Ex-Officio Board Member Grey, Representative of the Governor’s Workforce Board as well as the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee, shared that they have been trying for the last several years to make the connection to put people together with the goal of cross-connecting everybody – from the K-12 system, to the higher education system, to the CTE system, and everything in between, to help accomplish those goals. He referenced the number of things that Dr. Gilkey has in his letter as well as on his resume, and his experience leads him to believe that he is the a good choice for the role. He looks forward to using the expertise and experience that Dr. Gilkey brings, to unite the state around the things that need to be accomplished to help Rhode Islanders, both in the K-12 and higher education systems, as well as adult learners, achieve the goals that will make everyone successful.

**7. ACTION ITEM – Rhode Island Board of Education**

**a. Approval of the appointment of the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education**

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

**VOTED:** That the Rhode Island Board of Education approves the appointment of Dr. Shannon Gilkey as Commissioner of Postsecondary Education

Vote: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Mike Mello, Marianne Monte, Lawrence Purtill, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

NAYS: 0

Prior to adjourning, on behalf of the entire Board of Education, Board Chair Cottam thanked Ron Cavallaro, who served as the Acting Commissioner over the last several months, for his service, effort, advice, and his guidance.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Lawrence Purtill, it was

**VOTED:** That the joint special meeting of the Rhode Island Board of Education adjourns.

Vote: 16 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Michael Almeida, Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Karen Davis, Timothy DelGiudice, Patricia DiCenso, Dennis Duffy, Jo Eva Gaines, Rachelle Green, Thomas Izzo, Marta Martinez, Mike Mello, Marianne Monte, Lawrence Purtill, and Jeffery Williams

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINS: 0

The Rhode Island Board of Education meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.